

Contact: Matt Lloyd

**PENCE REFLECTS ON 50th ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION**

**Washington, May 17, 2004** - (Photo: Pence meets with students at a school in his district.) Fifty years ago today, the United States Supreme Court took an important step toward achieving the ideals of the Declaration of Independence when it rendered the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

By rejecting the “separate but equal” doctrine, the Court rejected as a lie the idea that Americans could be divided along racial lines and still have equal access to the American dream.

We’ve made a lot of progress recently, including the creation of a voucher program for children in the District of Columbia last year. One of my most satisfying moments in Congress was the day I skipped a ride to Indiana on Air Force One to cast the deciding vote for a the D.C. school choice program.

But as we rightly celebrate this important milestone, we do so against a backdrop of substandard performance in urban school systems that continue to fail many of our minorities with what the President calls “the soft bigotry of low expectations.”

I reject the very idea that the color of one’s skin or the size of a parent’s bank account has anything to do with a child’s ability to learn. What we need to do on this anniversary, is swing the doors of failing schools open and let the clear air of competition blow in the form of school choice vouchers.

Indianapolis is home to the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation and the very first privately funded school choice program founded by J. Patrick Rooney, so this idea is pretty near and dear to my heart.

Brown broke down the legal barriers to equal education. School choice breaks down the economic barriers to equal education.

--Congressman Mike Pence

To read more about the school choice program in Indianapolis, go to

[www.friedmanfoundation.org](http://www.friedmanfoundation.org). You can also link to this site by going to my blog.